

Jan: 17<sup>th</sup> 1829

Dr Ch: No 54

200 Arch St. Am

Inaugural Oration

Dated March 6. 1829

on  
Typhus Fever

For

The degree of Doctor of Medicine

In the  
University of Pennsylvania

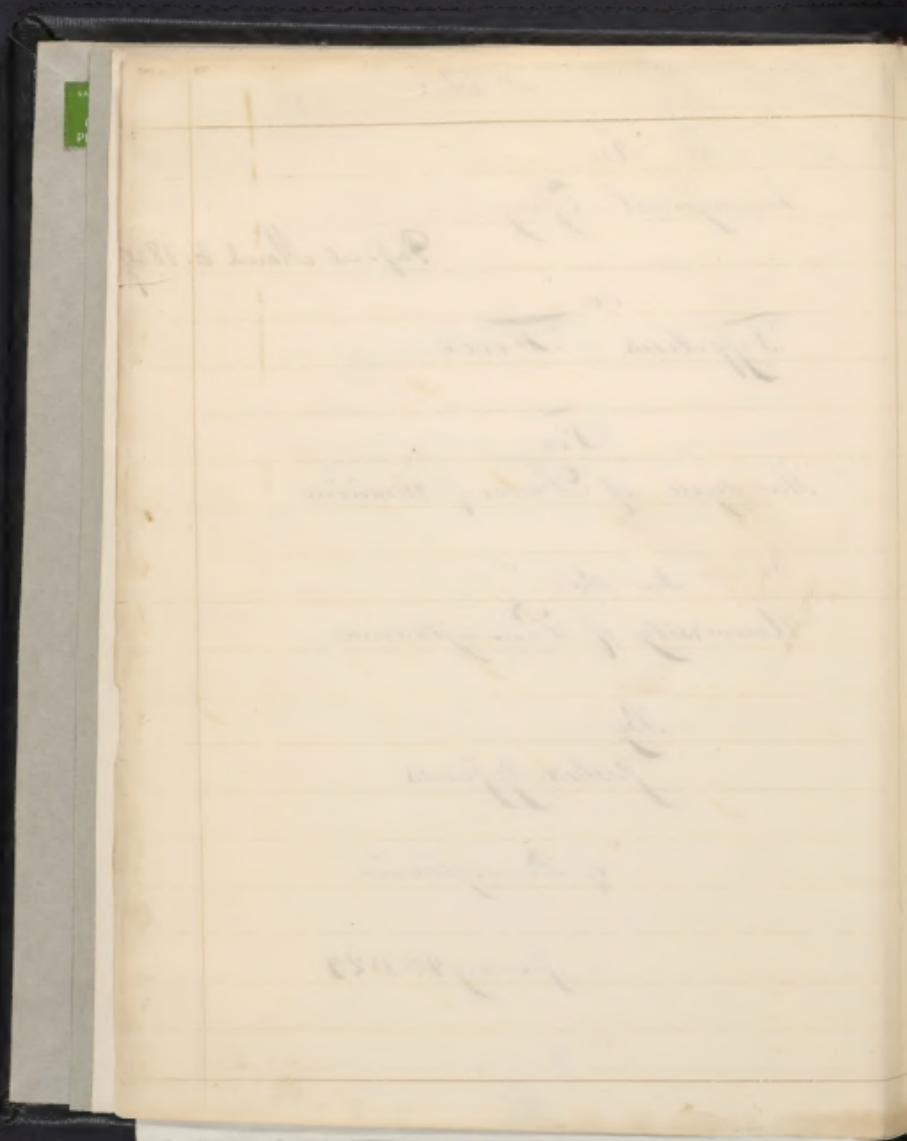
By

Joseph Jones

of Pennsylvania

January 9<sup>th</sup> 1829

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## Typhus Fever.

So far as my personal observations extend, respecting the existence of this formidable disease, in this section of our happy country, I feel justified in the conclusion, that of late it has been much more prevalent than formerly, owing most probably in a very great measure, to some peculiarity in the mode of living, which predisposes the system to its attack. Not less, from this fact, than from the circumstance of its too frequently baffling the wisdom and united efforts of practitioners, by the obscurity of its nature and diversity of forms which it not unfrequently presents, I was induced to take this species of fever as a proper subject to engage my attention in the accomplishment of an inaugural dissertation.

Typhus fever is found recorded by all nosological writers as a genus of continued fever, which



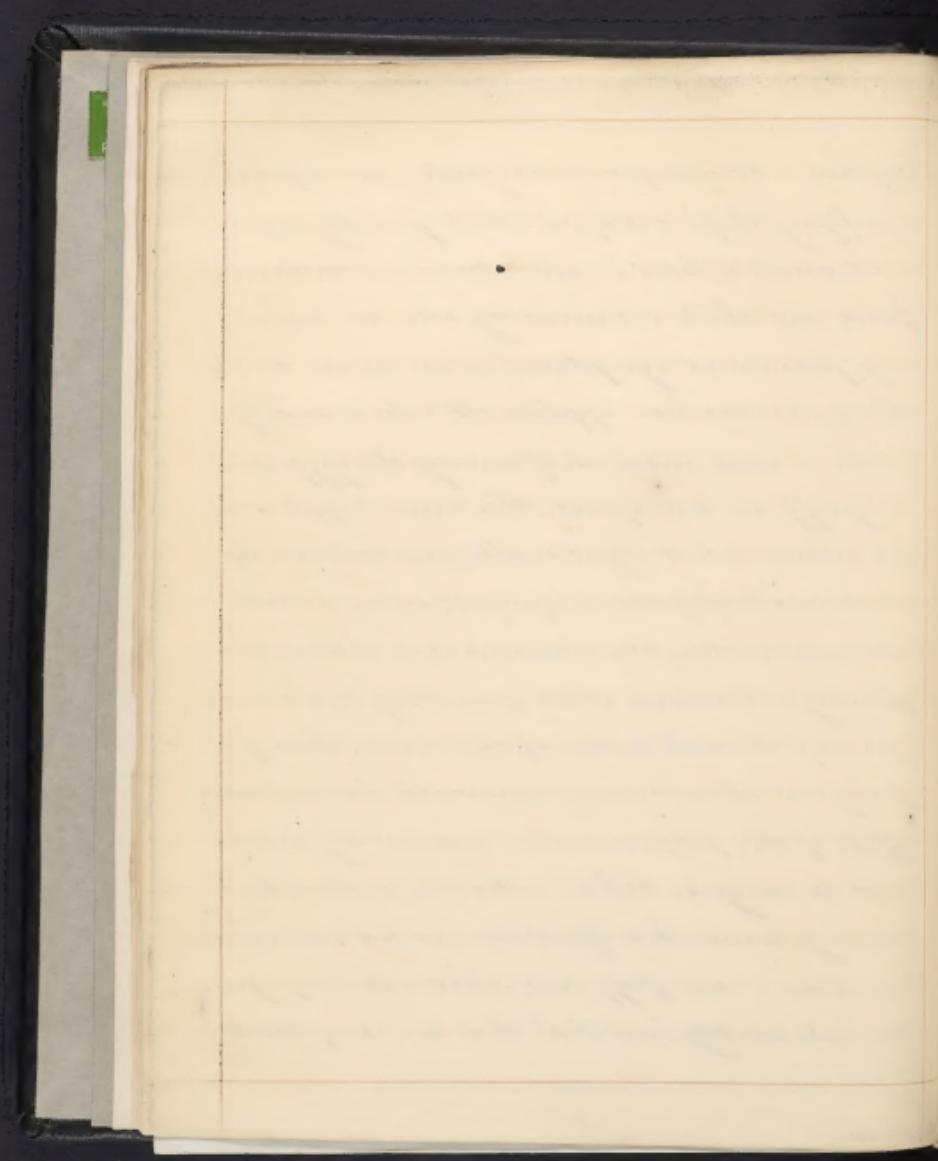
according to different authors has received different divisions: thus, by Cullen continued fever is divided into three genera; by Sauvages into four; by Lins-  
neus into four; by Sagar into five; and by Vogel into  
twenty four. These divisions, reaching beyond the  
necessity of such minutings, must, in a practi-  
cal point of view, rather serve to perplex than  
benefit the memory; wherefore a division of con-  
tinued fever into synochia or inflammatory and  
nervous or typhous merits a decided preference  
not only on account of its simplicity, but from  
the circumstance of its receiving the sanction  
of medical gentlemen, whose scientific attainments  
and talents are altogether unimpeachable. When  
I assert that the latter division is most correct I  
hold that my position is further corroborated  
by the opinion of Cullen in its favour, notwithstanding  
standing he has arranged continued fever into  
synochia, typhus, and synochus; for when speaking



of the last, he says, (to use his own words) "Setting  
short the limits between the synochus and ty-  
phus will be with difficulty affixed; and  
I am disposed to believe that synochus arises  
from the same causes as typhus, and is therefore  
only a variety of it." Trusting in the correctness  
of the opinion of Cullen on this point, it  
may be farther urged, that if a few symptoms  
of typhus and inflammatory fever occasionally  
presenting themselves simultaneously to the  
notice of the physician, should demand a  
distinct title, we would, upon the same prin-  
ciple be justified in introducing a new name  
to a combination of any two or more sym-  
ptoms from any two distinct diseases. From what  
I have stated, I maintain that there is no such  
fever as synochus, and to reject it as a species of  
continua is in perfect accordance with my  
humble opinion.

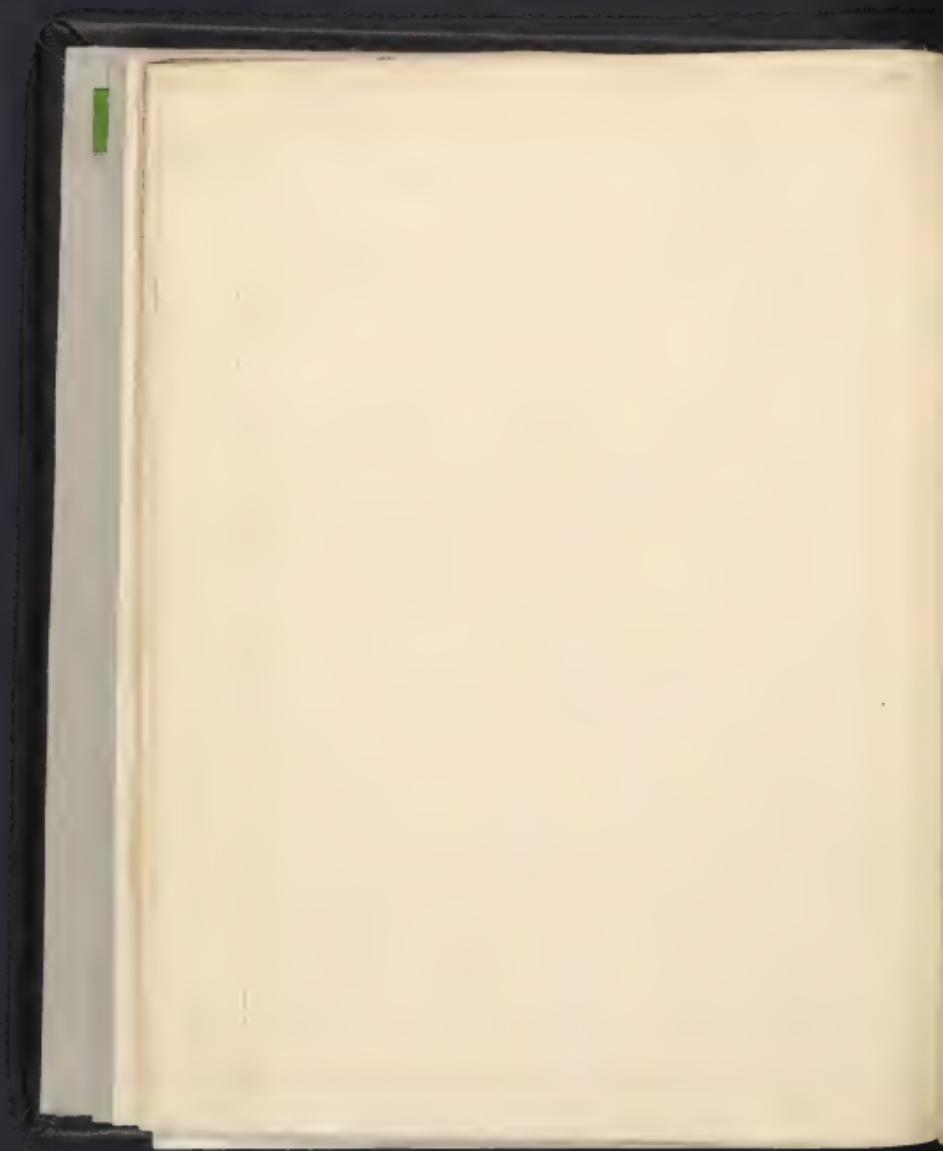


Typhus is derived from the greek word, *τυφως*,  
signifying sleep or stupor, which generally superv-  
enes, sooner or later, in most continuall and severe  
fevers, and which is universally allowed to be a  
very prominent symptom, in the disease bearing  
this name has been applied. It is also derived <sup>from</sup> *ty-  
phon*, a word made use of among the Egyptians  
to signify an evil spirit. This term, "Typhus" is  
to a certain extent objectionable, and to discard it,  
would not be altogether improper, when we take  
into consideration, the erroneous ideas, that are so  
generally entertained at the present day by the cul-  
pable as to the real nature of the disease, thus of-  
fusing an almost insurmountable barrier to the  
efforts of the physician in endeavouring to ar-  
rest its ravages. When called to a patient la-  
bouring under this affection, and his case is pre-  
mised a case of Typhus, what is the impression  
he immediately imbibes? That his complaint



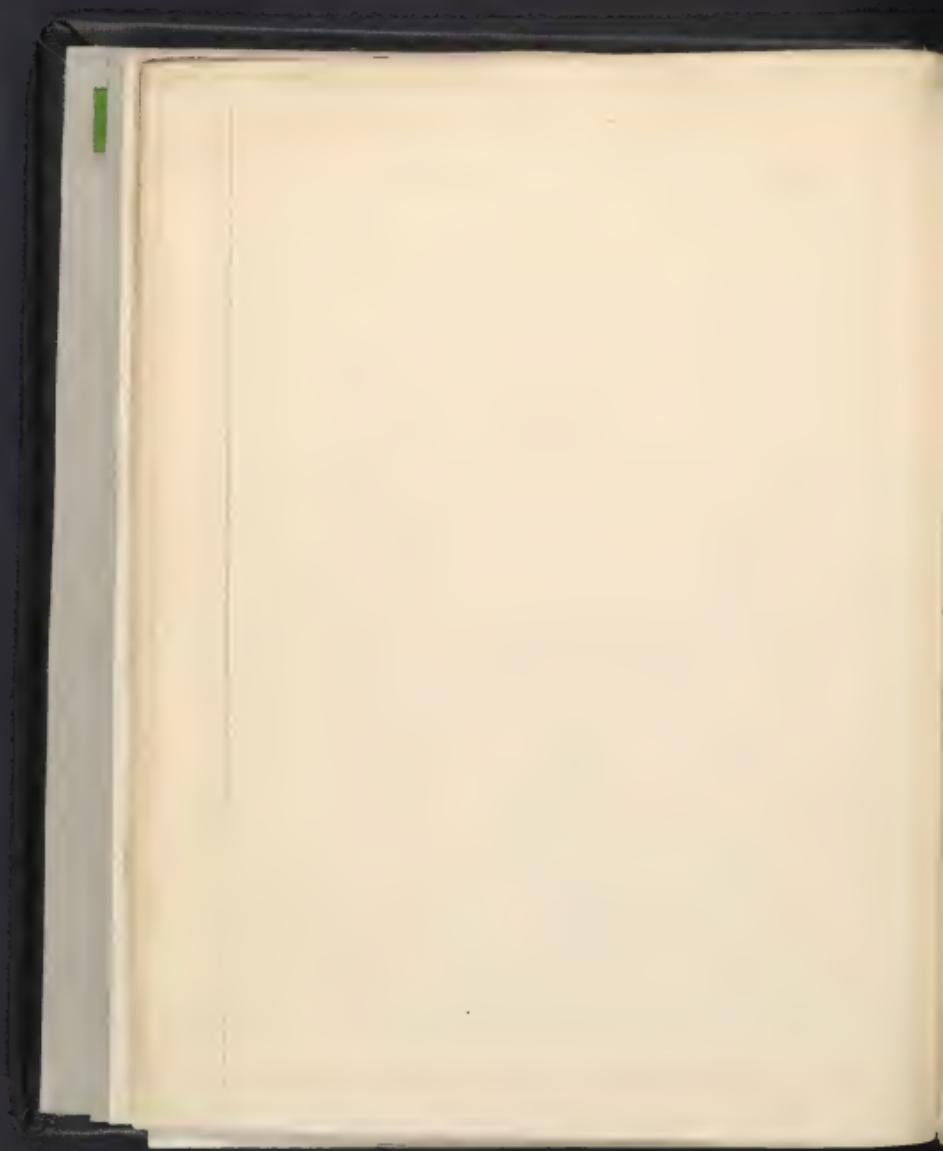
is one of ability, that all the clothing measures  
will ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> aggravate his condition; and that  
stimulants and tonics will ~~not~~ irritate his  
hearts. If then we commence our treatment  
with evacuating remedies, the patient's mind  
will operate against the remedial agency of our  
medicines, and thereby render our indications  
futile; hence the propriety of another name  
in view of typhus by which this form may  
be designated, and no one would seem more  
appropriate than Congestive.

Typhus, or miasmatism, has been divided into two  
the one gradual, the former is generally distin-  
guished from the latter by the more gradual  
progress of the attack and the greater unity of the  
symptoms; also by the absence of those symptoms  
which are said to indicate a putrefaction of the  
fluids, & the ~~one~~ is only an ~~opinion~~ of a disease of the skin, I am at a loss to determine the



peculiarity of retaining the distinction. For  
intermittent and unintermittent fevers we do not  
always meet with the same degree of violence  
in the symptoms, and hence are the same prin-  
ciple that we divide Typhus into intermit-  
tence, as may divide the fevers in question.

In the consideration of the different stages of this  
disease I am induced to believe, that they can be re-  
duced into three, "the irritative, congestive, and  
inflammatory" but the space of time interven-  
ing between these different stages may be of so short  
duration as not to be perceptible; and this a pre-  
mature conclusion may give rise to the idea of  
three non-existent. It may be added in further  
confirmation of my position, that in every case  
of Typhus fever, no matter what might have been  
the agent in its production, there is always more  
or less irritation modified by circumstances, which  
irritation is kept up for a due length of time.



becomes the cause of phlegm, and hence the subsequent congestion, which under similar circumstances is extremely productive of inflammation. It does not seem that congestion can commence without previous irritation, nor inflammation without previous congestion; but that irritation can exist without congestion and congestion without inflammation. From these facts we are enabled to conceive of the progression of the disease into the more acute and languid stages.

From such liable to an attack are those of whom capillaries, now whose evaporation requires a vascular life, and now subject, as we conceive, to the most evanescent state, and then again undergoing dissolution in the course of mounting lysis. It is observable to perceive those violent irritations that do not give an opportunity to the vessels and putrefaction they immediately cause to cease. They often protracted in patients, long intervals, without subsiding, and in most of them



it's ventilated & instruments of the place.

It appears sometimes occurs in warm climates, being  
in the more temperate and cold, its prevalence is to  
a much greater extent. In good Society, it is said that  
Typhus is favoured by low temperature, being most  
prevalent in the cold months of winter, generally  
occurring or abating as the heat of summer advances  
and then recurring in a considerable degree in  
cold and autumn.

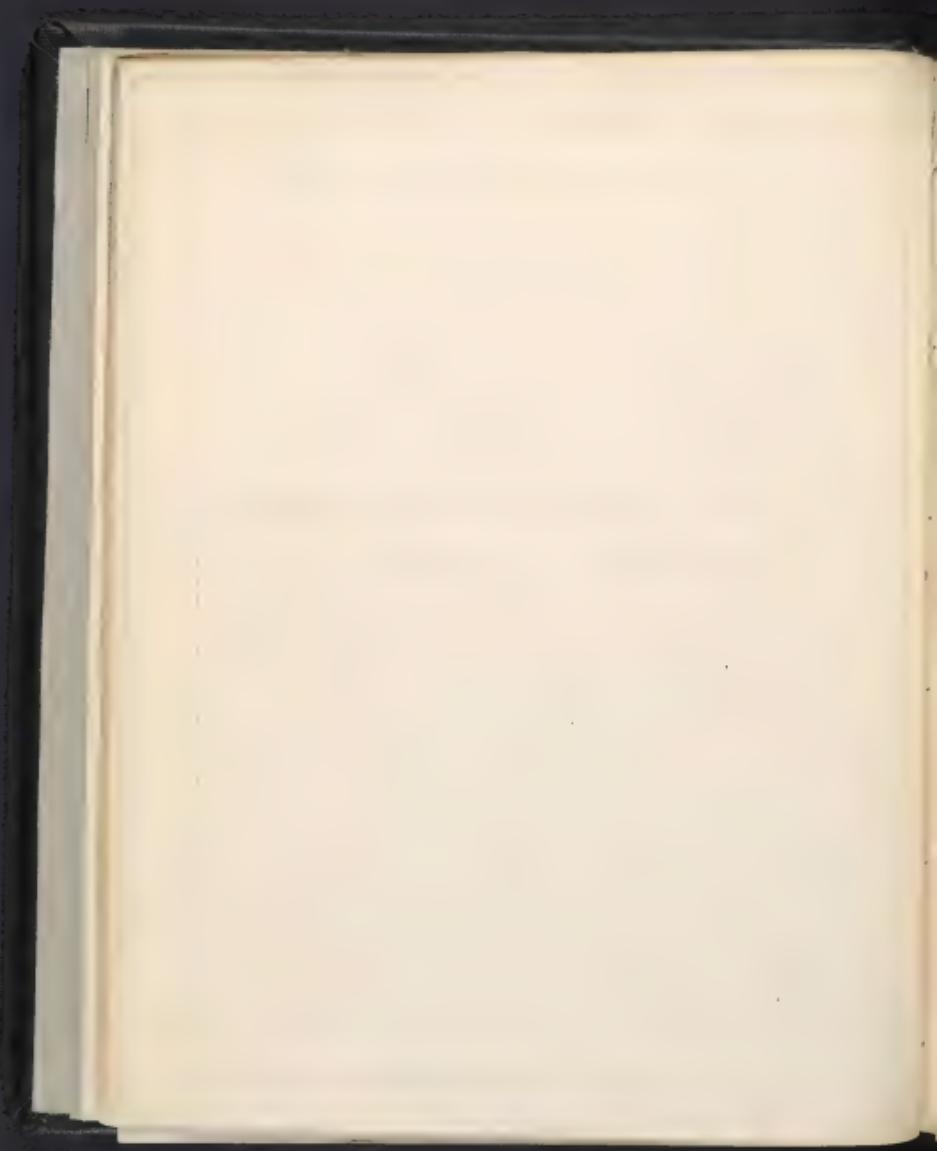
As it respects the cause we are opinion that there are  
more than one, which occasionally produce this dis-  
ease, and in the first place it will speak of conta-  
gion. This is supposed to cause in all states con-  
fin'd within a given space fully saturated with  
the effluvia arising from the body of patients  
labouring under this disease. Whether this is an act  
of communication or of producing disease in a  
person exposed to its influence similar to the one  
from which it had its origin, has called into



acquisition the intellectual power of the most  
reputable physician from the time of Hippo-  
crates down to the present day. Activities concerning  
the controversies which have existed relative to this  
pains nothing decidedly satisfactory has been addu-  
ced, both parties, however numerous in favour  
of their respective positions which they are not  
without some degree of probability. From my  
limited knowledge of the contagion of syphilis I  
feel an inability to draw any positive conclu-  
sion respecting it, and know but from rather an  
inclination of opinion, that under certain circum-  
stances it was more, from, and is propagated by  
contagion. This would seem, in a measure veri-  
fied by the circumstance of its frequently occur-  
ring through a whole family when only one  
person at first is attacked; and also from the  
numerous facts observed and related by Dr. Way-  
worth, which were subsequently confirmed by



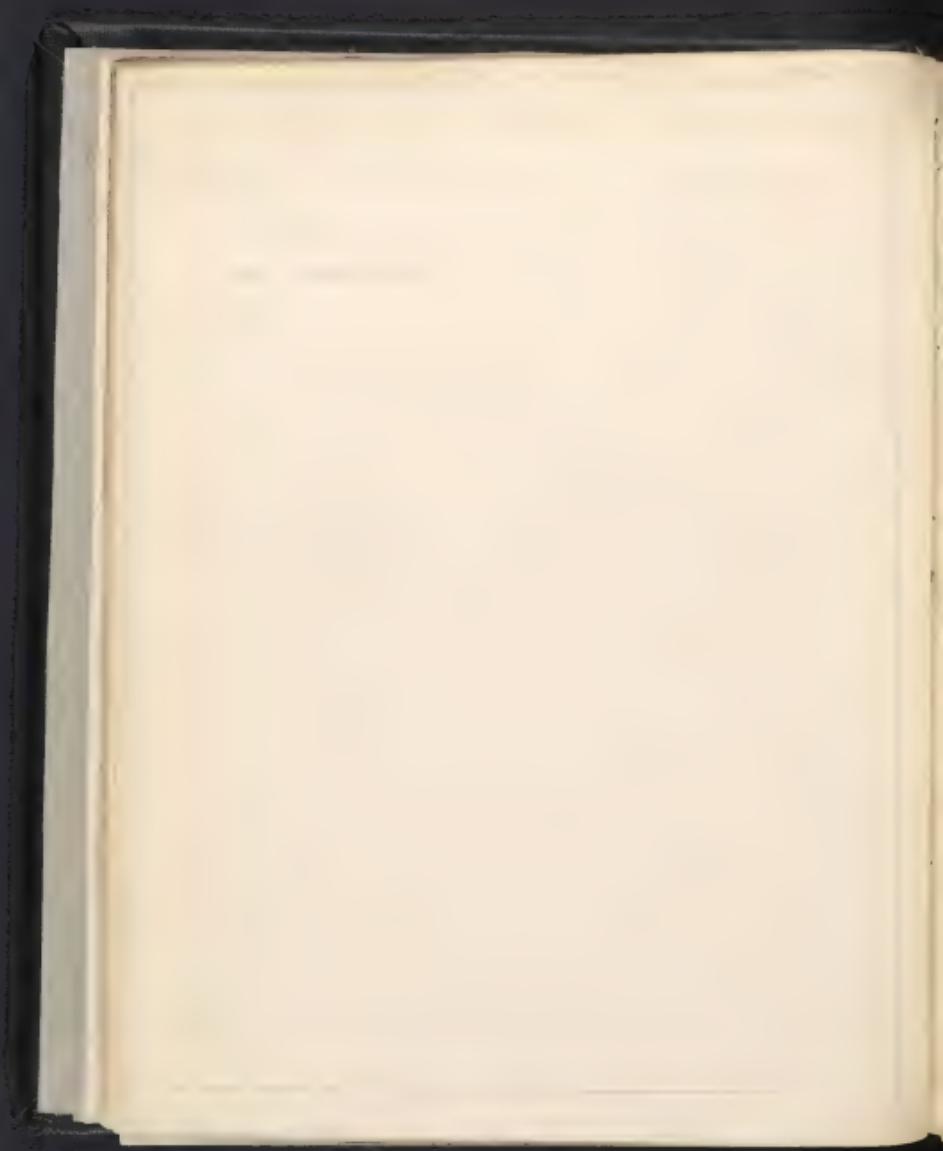
the observations of Bawcagh. By the former it appears  
that the Star, not more than one person out of twenty  
there is naturally exempted from it; for when  
one hundred and eighty eight men, women & children  
were fully exposed to the contagion of typhus, in rays  
and nights together, in small, close, and dirty rooms,  
not a tenth even, eight were infected with this fever.  
Considering the probability of its occasional origin  
from contagion, I am nevertheless led to the be-  
lief from several personal observations, that it fre-  
quently arises from other causes independent  
of the one last mentioned. Of these the first to  
occur in view is miasma, or a noxious state of  
the atmosphere, arising from natural or arti-  
ficial places, solution by some external agent,  
of the noxious nature of miasma necessarily de-  
mands the confession of an ignorance for  
more than once it has baffled the attempt of  
chemists in endeavoring to effect its analysis.



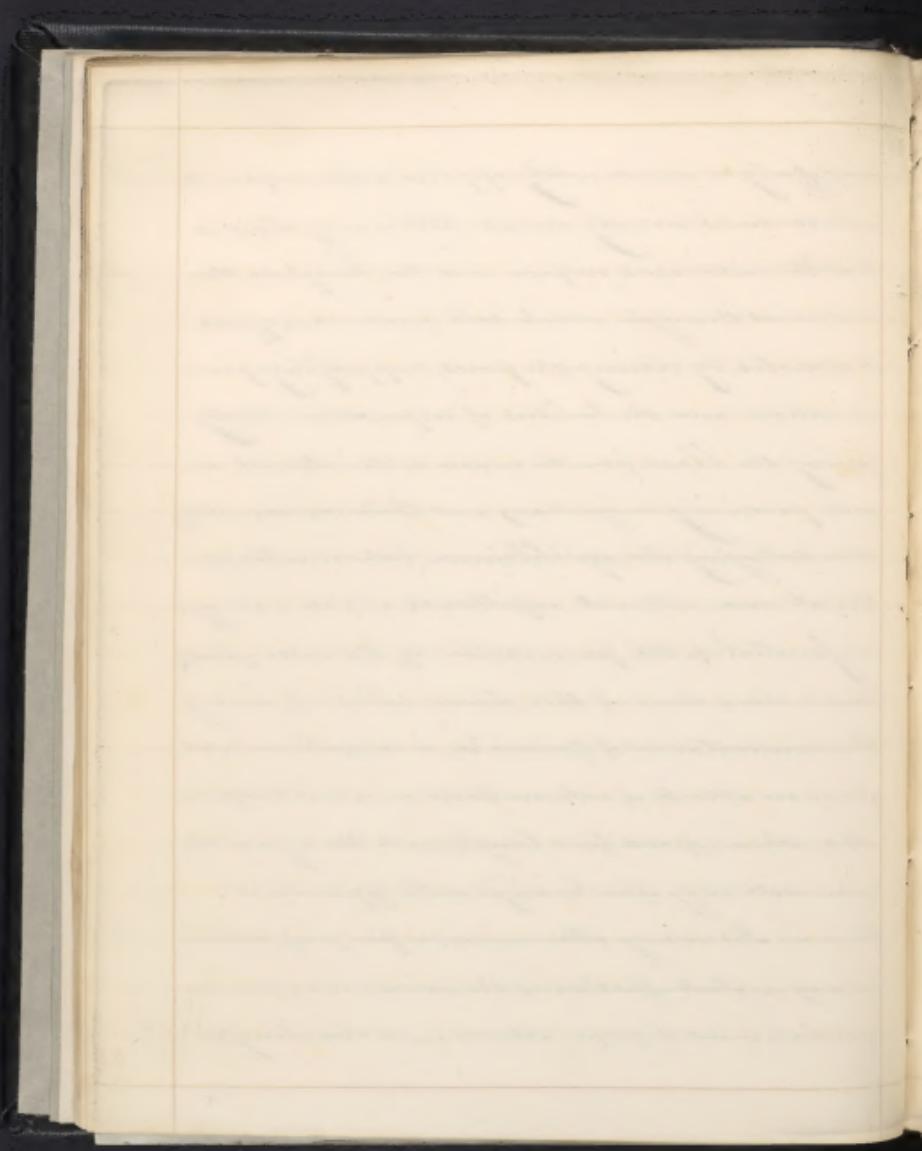
In the opinion of some, that as nothing natural exists, without an active causing principle, which if natural is but principle; as the cause of material, as of all other causes must be, what may be communicated, in contradistinction from natural, spiritual, or beyond the horizon of our senses and reason, therefore not to be discerned without the aid of revelation.

"causa latet, and est uniprincipium." That this hincaron principle is often productive of the disease in question, I do not entertain the slightest doubt. Of the modes principia of these diseases, nothing satisfactory has been known.

Besides the causes above mentioned there are others which are supposed to be instrumental in its production. Among these the first that meets the attention is the application of cold. This ordinary circumstance, there is no question of any ill-consequences, but when suddenly,



irregularly or inordinately applied to the surface, the reverse most usually occurs. It is very obvious that the cutaneous surface and the lungs are the medium through which cold produces its effects; it operates by closing the pores, suspending perspiration and the facilities of respiration, thereby forcing the blood from the surface to the internal organs, producing congestion and their concomitants, thus destroying the equilibrium between the external and internal capillaries, which is always so essential to the preservation of the order of health. Heat is also a cause of this disease, which is proved by the circumstance of persons in a convalescent state from an attack of intermittent or remittent fever who when exposed for a long time to the rays of the sun will very often be seized with typhus fever. There are also many other causes: as fear, grief, despair, or any violent affection of the mind; also a penurious diet, want of proper attention to cleanliness, &c.



But above all, the most prolific source is the ill management of intermittent, remittent or bilious continued fever, by resorting prematurely to the administration of tonics and stimuli, under the erroneous impression that of debility, or a tendency to it in those diseases, especially

Syphilis always makes its attack on the system in a very insidious manner. Generally the patient feels so slight an indisposition in the commencement, that he is induced to continue in the prosecution of his avocation, for a greater or less space of time under the idea of its spontaneous subsidence. At first there is no chil. pern. nor pain, then being only a loss of appetite, languor, and some depression of spirits; which, if not arrested, are soon or later followed by tenderness and swells of the muscles, with acute pain in the head, back and extremities, accompanied with alternate chills and flushes of heat. These are soon followed by a hot dry skin;

